

A. Takahashi et al.
U.S. Serial No. 10/004,564
Page 3 of 7

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during a telephone interview on May 6, 2003. In the interview, the Examiner and Applicants' representative discussed an amendment to the independent claims which would overcome rejections involving the Mistretta reference. Claims 1, 21, and 24 have been amended in the manner discussed during the telephone interview.

Claims 1-26 are pending in the subject application. Claims 1, 21, and 24 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the specification as originally filed (see, e.g., specification at page 5, last paragraph to page 6, first paragraph; see also FIGS. 3 and 4(a) to 4(d)).

Applicants' claimed invention is directed to a disc cartridge, including: a disc having a recording layer; a disc cover for covering at least a surface for recording/reproducing, which is accessed by a head for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc; and a connecting means for connecting the disc and the disc cover, wherein a side of the disc opposite to the side covered by the disc cover is exposed externally.

As shown in FIGS. 1(a) and 1(b), the disc cartridge of the present invention is so arranged that a lower part of a disc 1 is covered by a disc cover 2 leaving only an opening section 6 uncovered, while an upper part of the disc (a top surface of the disc 1) is exposed (see specification at page 13, lines 8-13). Because the disc cover 2 covers the disc 1, the surface for recording/reproducing is protected from damage, and the effects of dust and dirt (see page 5, last paragraph to page 6, first paragraph).

As recited in claims 1, 21, and 24, a head 11 can access the recording/reproducing surface (see FIGS. 3 and 4(a) to 4(d)) for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc 1. Because the disc 1 has the recording film 15 on the light incident surface of the disc substrate 14, a shorter focal point distance of the laser

A. Takahashi et al.
U.S. Serial No. 10/004,564
Page 4 of 7

beam can be used. Therefore, the head 11 can have a smaller size and lighter weight, as compared to conventional recording/reproducing heads (see page 22, second full paragraph).

Claims 1, 3, 4, 9, and 16-20 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,548,571 to Mistretta. Claims 2 and 10-15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mistretta in view of U.S. Patent 5,202,880 to Lee et al. (hereinafter "Lee"). Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mistretta in view of U.S. Patent 4,677,516 to Iizuka et al. (hereinafter "Iizuka"). Claims 21, 22, 24, and 26 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mistretta in view of U.S. Patent 5,537,281 to Ma et al. (hereinafter "Ma"). These rejections are respectfully traversed, and for convenience are addressed together.

Mistretta fails to teach or suggest a disc cartridge having a disc cover for covering at least a surface for recording/reproducing, which is accessed by a head for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc.

In Mistretta, with reference to FIGS. 1 and 2 as cited in the Office Action, a pair of spring-loaded latches 14 cooperate with a disk-edge support 16 to releasably support a disk 6 at its peripheral edge on a disk carrier 8 (see column 1, lines 51-54). When the disk 6 is in use, it is inserted into a disk utilization device 2 (see FIG. 1) for recording/reproducing.

Mistretta does not teach or suggest a disc cartridge having a disc cover which covers at least a surface for recording/reproducing, which is accessed by a head for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc. Mistretta does not teach or suggest a head for accessing the recording/reproducing surface of the disc. Moreover, the latches 14 and disk-edge support 16 are used to releasably hold the disk 6 on the disk carrier 8, but do not cover any recording/reproducing surface of the disk 6.

A. Takahashi et al.
U.S. Serial No. 10/004,564
Page 5 of 7

Therefore, the claims should now be in condition for immediate allowance. However, if there are any outstanding issues, the Examiner is urged to call the undersigned at the phone number listed below.

The Applicants believe that additional fees are not required for consideration of the within Amendment. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. **04-1105**.

Respectfully submitted,
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A. Takahashi et al.
U.S. Serial No. 10/004,564
Page 6 of 7

APPENDIX A:
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 21, and 24 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A disc cartridge, comprising:
 - a disc in a disc shape, including a recording layer for recording/reproducing information;
 - a disc cover for covering at least a [part of one side of] surface for recording/reproducing, which is accessed by a head for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc; and
 - connecting means for connecting the disc and the disc cover,
 - wherein a side of the disc, which is opposite to the side of the disc covered by the disc cover, is exposed externally.

21. (Amended) A disc drive for using a disc cartridge, which includes (a) a disc in a disc shape, including a recording layer for recording/reproducing information, (b) a disc cover for covering at least a [part of one side of] surface for recording/reproducing, which is accessed by a head for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc, and (c) connecting means for connecting the disc and the disc cover, wherein a side of the disc, which is opposite to the side of the disc covered by the disc cover, is exposed externally, the disc [cartridge,] drive comprising:
 - [a] the head for recording/reproducing with respect to the disc; and
 - separating means for separating the disc and the disc cover, so as to allow the head to be inserted between the disc and disc cover so that the recording/reproducing is performed.

24. (Amended) A disc drive for using a disc cartridge, which includes (a) a disc in a disc shape, including a recording layer for recording/reproducing information, (b) a disc cover for covering at least a [part of one side of] surface for recording/reproducing,

A. Takahashi et al.
U.S. Serial No. 10/004,564
Page 7 of 7

which is accessed by a head for recording/reproducing information with respect to the disc, (c) connecting means for connecting the disc and the disc cover, and (d) a shutter, being provided on the disc cover, for switching over whether the disc is exposed or unexposed, wherein a side of the disc, which is opposite to the side of the disc covered by the disc cover, is exposed externally, the disc drive[,] comprising:

[a] the head for recording/reproducing with respect to the disc; and

shutter opening/closing means for opening/closing the shutter,

wherein the head is moved close to the disc that is exposed through the shutter opened by the shutter opening/closing means, so that the recording/reproducing is performed.